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## Viewing cable 07CAIRO1417, PRESIDENTIAL SUCCESSION IN EGYPT

If you are new to these pages, please read an introduction on the [structure of a cable](#) as well as how to [discuss them](#) with others. See also the [FAQs](#)

### Understanding cables

Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

To understand the justification used for the classification of each cable, please use this [WikiSource](#) article as reference.

### Discussing cables

If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at the paragraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tags **#cablegate** and a hash containing the reference ID e.g. **#07CAIRO1417**.

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
07CAIRO1417	2007-05-14 14:23	2011-08-30 01:44	CONFIDENTIAL	Embassy Cairo

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/13/2017  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [EG](#)  
SUBJECT: PRESIDENTIAL SUCCESSION IN EGYPT

REF: A. CAIRO 671  
[1](#)B. CAIRO 974  
[1](#)C. 2006 CAIRO 2010

CLASSIFIED BY: AMBASSADOR FRANCIS J. RICCIARDONE,  
FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D).

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY AND INTRODUCTION: PRESIDENTIAL SUCCESSION IS THE ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM OF EGYPTIAN POLITICS. DESPITE INCESSANT WHISPERED DISCUSSIONS, NO ONE IN EGYPT HAS ANY CERTAINTY ABOUT WHO WILL SUCCEED MUBARAK, OR HOW THE SUCCESSION WILL HAPPEN. MUBARAK HIMSELF SEEMS TO BE TRUSTING TO GOD AND THE INERTIA OF THE MILITARY AND CIVILIAN SECURITY SERVICES TO ENSURE AN ORDERLY TRANSITION. IN THE CURRENT POLITICAL FRAMEWORK, THE MOST LIKELY CONTENDERS ARE PRESIDENTIAL SON GAMAL MUBARAK (WHOSE PROFILE IS EVER-INCREASING AT THE RULING NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY), EGIS CHIEF OMAR SOLIMAN, DARK HORSE ARAB LEAGUE SECRETARY GENERAL AMRE MOUSSA, OR AN AS-YET UNKNOWN MILITARY OFFICER.

WHOEVER ENDS UP AS EGYPT'S NEXT PRESIDENT LIKELY WILL BE POLITICALLY WEAKER THAN MUBARAK. ONCE MUBARAK'S SUCCESSOR HAS ASSUMED THE POST, HIS FIRST PRIORITY WILL BE TO BUILD POPULAR SUPPORT. WE THUS EXPECT THAT THE NEW PRESIDENT WILL LIKELY ADOPT AN ANTI-AMERICAN TONE IN HIS INITIAL PUBLIC RHETORIC, IN AN EFFORT TO PROVE HIS NATIONALIST BONA FIDES TO THE EGYPTIAN STREET, AND MAY POSSIBLY EXTEND AN OLIVE BRANCH TO THE MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD, AS DID PREVIOUS EGYPTIAN PRESIDENTS AT THE BEGINNING OF THEIR TERMS. END SUMMARY.

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LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR SUCCESSION  
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12. (C) PRESIDENT MUBARAK IS FOND OF OBSERVING THAT NO ONE SHOULD HAVE ANY QUALMS REGARDING HIS SUCCESSION, SINCE EGYPT'S CONSTITUTION PROVIDES A DETAILED GUIDE FOR HOW A SUCCESSION SHOULD PROCEED. AMONG THE RECENT CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS WAS A NOTABLE CHANGE TO THE ARTICLE DETERMINING WHICH OFFICIAL ASSUMES POWER IN THE EVENT OF THE TEMPORARY INCAPACITATION OF THE PRESIDENT. ARTICLE 82, WHICH PREVIOUSLY DELINEATED THAT THE VICE-PRESIDENT SHOULD ASSUME PRESIDENTIAL POWERS "IF ON ACCOUNT OF ANY TEMPORARY OBSTACLE THE PRESIDENT IS UNABLE TO CARRY OUT HIS DUTIES," HAS BEEN AMENDED SO THAT, IF THERE IS NO VICE-PRESIDENT, THE PRIME MINISTER IS ASSIGNED PRESIDENTIAL POWERS. ARTICLE 84 READS, "IN CASE OF THE VACANCY OF THE PRESIDENTIAL OFFICE OR THE PERMANENT DISABILITY OF THE PRESIDENT," THE PRESIDENT OF THE PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLY (PA) OR THE PRESIDENT OF THE SUPREME CONSTITUTIONAL COURT SHOULD TEMPORARILY ASSUME THE PRESIDENCY. NEITHER WOULD SUBSEQUENTLY BE ALLOWED TO NOMINATE HIMSELF FOR THE PRESIDENCY; THERE IS NO SUCH STIPULATION AGAINST THE PM RUNNING FOR THE OFFICE. ARTICLE 84 GOES ON TO STIPULATE THAT, "THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC SHALL BE CHOSEN WITHIN A MAXIMUM PERIOD OF 60 DAYS FROM THE DAY OF THE VACANCY OF THE PRESIDENCY."

13. (C) CONSTITUTIONAL ARTICLE 76, WHICH PREVIOUSLY WIRED THE EGYPTIAN ELECTORAL FRAMEWORK TO GUARANTEE THE PRESIDENCY TO THE RULING NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY (NDP), WAS ALSO AMONG THE ARTICLES AMENDED IN APRIL (REF A). THE CHANGE WILL OSTENSIBLY FACILITATE MORE COMPETITIVE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS, WHILE STILL PROTECTING AGAINST ANY SERIOUS CHALLENGE TO THE NDP CANDIDATE. UNDER THE REVISIONS TO ARTICLE 76, FOR AN INTERIM 10-YEAR PERIOD (I.E. UNTIL 2017), LEGAL POLITICAL PARTIES WHICH HOLD AN ELECTED SEAT IN THE PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLY OR SHURA COUNCIL CAN NOMINATE A PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE (CURRENTLY, ONLY FOUR PARTIES MEET THIS REQUIREMENT - THE NDP, AL GHAD, AL WAFD, AND TAGGAMU). FOLLOWING THE INTERIM PERIOD, IN ORDER TO RUN A PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE:

-- A PARTY HAS TO HAVE BEEN IN EXISTENCE FOR AT LEAST 5 YEARS PRIOR TO THE ELECTION;

-- ITS CANDIDATE MUST HAVE BEEN A MEMBER OF THE HIGHEST LEADERSHIP BODY OF THE PARTY FOR AT LEAST 1 YEAR; AND,

-- THE PARTY WOULD HAVE TO HOLD AT LEAST 3% OF THE SEATS IN BOTH PARLIAMENTARY HOUSES (I.E., 14 SEATS IN THE PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLY, AND 6 SEATS IN THE SHURA COUNCIL), OR 6% OF THE SEATS IN EITHER THE PA OR SHURA COUNCIL).

14. (C) GENUINELY INDEPENDENT CANDIDATES FACE AN ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE BAR TO ENTER THE RACE. TO COMPETE IN THE NEXT PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION, ARTICLE 76 STATES THAT AN "INDEPENDENT" MUST OBTAIN ENDORSEMENTS FROM 250 ELECTED MEMBERS OF EGYPT'S NATIONAL AND LOCAL REPRESENTATIVE BODIES, OF WHICH THERE MUST BE A MINIMUM OF 65 ENDORSEMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PEOPLES ASSEMBLY, 25 FROM THE SHURA COUNCIL, AND 10 FROM LOCAL COUNCILS IN AT LEAST 14 GOVERNORATES. THIS WOULD BE A NEAR UNATTAINABLE FEAT FOR A NON-NDP CANDIDATE TO ACHIEVE, GIVEN THE RULING PARTY'S DOMINATION OF ALL EGYPTIAN ELECTED BODIES. IN EFFECT, THE PROVISIONS OF ARTICLE 76 ACCOMPLISH TWO OBJECTIVES REGARDING INDEPENDENTS: THE RULING PARTY CAN BLOCK THE EMERGENCE OF ANY GENUINELY "INDEPENDENT" CANDIDATE, WHILE IT COULD THEORETICALLY REACH BEYOND THE

NDP'S TOP LEADERSHIP TO SELECT AN "INDEPENDENT" WHOM THE RULING ELITE JUDGES WILL BEST PROTECT THEIR INTERESTS, PROVIDED THE NDP RETAINS PARTY DISCIPLINE.

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POTENTIAL CANDIDATES  
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15. (C) PRESIDENT MUBARAK, WHO BEGAN HIS FIFTH 6-YEAR TERM IN SEPTEMBER 2005, RECENTLY TURNED 79. THE NEXT PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IS DUE TO BE HELD IN 2011. BY THE TIME MUBARAK SERVES HIS FULL TERM, THERE MAY BE OTHER CANDIDATES IN THE WINGS, OR MUBARAK HIMSELF COULD CHOOSE TO RUN AGAIN FOR THE PRESIDENCY. HE IS ON RECORD AS SAYING, IN A NOVEMBER 2006 SPEECH, THAT HE PLANNED TO REMAIN PRESIDENT "AS LONG AS I HAVE A HEART THAT BEATS, AND BREATH IN MY BODY." BUT IF THE SUCCESSION HAPPENED TOMORROW, EGYPTIAN PARLOR SPECULATION FOCUSES ON THE FOLLOWING AS POSSIBLE SUCCESSORS.

GAMAL MUBARAK  
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16. (C) CAIRENE CONVENTIONAL WISDOM HOLDS THAT GAMAL WANTS THE JOB, DESPITE HIS REPEATED DENIALS TO THE CONTRARY (REF B). THE MOST RECENT SUCH ABJURATION WAS ON MAY 2, DURING AN INTERVIEW WITH THE ORBIT SATELLITE TV CHANNEL, WHEN GAMAL STATED THAT, "I DO NOT HAVE THE INTENTION AND AMBITION TO RUN FOR PRESIDENT ... WHATEVER THE PARTY SAYS DOES NOT MATTER. I AM NOT LOOKING FOR ANY EXECUTIVE POST." SUCH COY DEMURRALS RING HOLLOW IN THE FACE OF HIS INCREASINGLY ROBUST ROLE WITHIN THE NDP (FAR EXCEEDING THAT OF HIS COUNTERPARTS IN THE PARTY HIERARCHY), HIS APPARENTLY CENTRAL ROLE IN CREATING NEW LEGISLATION, AND HIS RECENT TOURS TO VARIOUS GOVERNORATES FEATURING MINISTERIAL ENTOURAGES. IT IS HARD TO ARGUE THAT GAMAL IS NOT BEING GROOMED FOR THE PRESIDENCY.

17. (C) MANY IN THE EGYPTIAN ELITE SEE HIS SUCCESSION AS POSITIVE, AS HIS LIKELY CONTINUATION OF THE CURRENT STATUS QUO WOULD SERVE THEIR BUSINESS AND POLITICAL INTERESTS. GIVEN THE LEGAL REQUIREMENTS FOR CANDIDACY, AND WEAK OPPOSITION LEADERSHIP, THERE ARE CURRENTLY FEW OTHER EGYPTIAN PERSONALITIES WITH THE NATIONAL STATURE AND POLITICAL CAPITAL TO SERIOUSLY CONTEND FOR THE PRESIDENCY. LIKEWISE, DUE TO THE PARANOIA OF THE EGYPTIAN DICTATORSHIP, NO OTHER NAME CAN SAFELY OR RESPECTFULLY BE BRUIED AS A CONTENDER. WHILE THE PRESIDENT'S SON IS VULNERABLE TO OPEN CRITICISM FOR HIS PRESUMED AMBITION, HE IS THE ONLY PERSON IN EGYPT WHOSE TOTAL LOYALTY TO MUBARAK IS ALSO TAKEN FOR GRANTED, SO HIS IS THE ONLY NAME THAT CAN POSSIBLY BE BANDIED ABOUT.

18. (C) A KEY STUMBLING BLOCK FOR A GAMAL CANDIDACY COULD BE THE MILITARY. EACH OF EGYPT'S FOUR PRESIDENTS SINCE 1952 AROSE FROM THE OFFICER CORPS, AND THE MILITARY HAS HISTORICALLY BEEN THE ULTIMATE GUARANTOR OF THE PRESIDENT'S RULE. GAMAL DID NOT SERVE AS A MILITARY OFFICER, AND WE BELIEVE HE DID NOT COMPLETE HIS COMPULSORY SERVICE. MANY OBSERVERS OPINE THAT TIMING IS THE CRUCIAL FACTOR FOR A POTENTIAL GAMAL PRESIDENCY - HIS POWER BASE IS HIS FATHER, AND SO WHILE HE COULD CONCEIVABLY BE INSTALLED PRIOR TO MUBARAK'S DEATH, THE TASK WOULD BECOME FAR MORE DIFFICULT, ALTHOUGH NOT INSURMOUNTABLE, ONCE THE PHARAOH HAS DEPARTED THE SCENE, AND PERSONAL LOYALTIES TO HIM ARE IN THE PAST. ALTHOUGH THERE IS WIDESPREAD POPULAR ANIMUS AGAINST A GAMAL CANDIDACY, WITH MANY EGYPTIANS OPINING PROUDLY THAT, "WE ARE NOT SYRIA OR SAUDI!", THE NDP MACHINERY COULD LIKELY STAGE AN ELECTORAL VICTORY, BASED ON POOR VOTER TURNOUT, SLOPPY VOTER LISTS, AND STATE CONTROL OF THE ELECTION APPARATUS.

OMAR SOLIMAN  
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19. (C) EGYPTIAN INTELLIGENCE CHIEF AND MUBARAK CONSIGLIERE, IN PAST YEARS SOLIMAN WAS OFTEN CITED AS LIKELY TO BE NAMED TO THE LONG-VACANT VICE-PRESIDENTIAL POST. IN THE PAST TWO YEARS, SOLIMAN HAS STEPPED OUT OF THE SHADOWS, AND ALLOWED HIMSELF TO BE PHOTOGRAPHED, AND HIS MEETINGS WITH FOREIGN LEADERS REPORTED. MANY OF OUR CONTACTS BELIEVE THAT SOLIMAN, BECAUSE OF HIS MILITARY BACKGROUND, WOULD AT THE LEAST HAVE

TO FIGURE IN ANY SUCCESSION SCENARIO FOR GAMAL, POSSIBLY AS A TRANSITIONAL FIGURE. SOLIMAN HIMSELF ADAMANTLY DENIES ANY PERSONAL AMBITIONS, BUT HIS INTEREST AND DEDICATION TO NATIONAL SERVICE IS OBVIOUS. HIS LOYALTY TO MUBARAK SEEMS ROCK-SOLID. AT AGE 71, HE COULD BE ATTRACTIVE TO THE RULING APPARATUS AND THE PUBLIC AT LARGE AS A RELIABLE FIGURE UNLIKELY TO HARBOR AMBITIONS FOR ANOTHER MULTI-DECADE PRESIDENCY. A KEY UNANSWERED QUESTION IS HOW HE WOULD RESPOND TO A GAMAL PRESIDENCY ONCE MUBARAK IS DEAD. AN ALLEGED PERSONAL FRIEND OF SOLIMAN TELLS US THAT SOLIMAN "DETESTS" THE IDEA OF GAMAL AS PRESIDENT, AND THAT HE ALSO WAS "DEEPLY PERSONALLY HURT" BY MUBARAK, WHO PROMISED TO NAME HIM VICE-PRESIDENT SEVERAL YEARS AGO, BUT THEN RENEGED.

AMRE MOUSSA  
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¶10. (C) THE CHARISMATIC ARAB LEAGUE SECRETARY GENERAL PRUDENTLY HAS NEVER INDICATED INTENTION OR AMBITION TO ENTER INTO EGYPT'S DOMESTIC POLITICAL FRAY, AND HAS NO EGYPTIAN INSTITUTIONAL POLITICAL PLATFORM FROM WHICH TO SPRING. HOWEVER, AS THE HIGH-PROFILE ELDER STATESMAN OF ARAB CAUSES, HE ENJOYS CONSIDERABLE STREET CREDIBILITY, POPULARITY, AND PERCEIVED GRAVITAS. IT IS FAR-FETCHED BUT CONCEIVABLE THAT, IN A LEADERSHIP CRISIS FOLLOWING MUBARAK'S DEATH, MOUSSA COULD EMERGE AS A PRESIDENTIAL CONTENDER, PROVIDED THAT HE IS AN NDP MEMBER, OR IF THE NDP WERE TO PROMOTE HIM UNDER THE CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS ALLOWED FOR INDEPENDENT CANDIDATES.

MILITARY OFFICER  
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¶11. (C) CURRENTLY, THERE IS NO OBVIOUS CONTENDER FROM AMONG THE OFFICER CORPS, EGYPT'S TRADITIONAL PRESIDENTIAL RECRUITMENT GROUNDS. MINISTER OF DEFENSE TANTAWI, A CONTEMPORARY OF MUBARAK'S, APPEARS TO HARBOR NO POLITICAL AMBITIONS. LIKE SOLIMAN, HE COULD PLAY A ROLE IN CLEARING THE WAY FOR GAMAL, IF HE CALCULATES THAT IS IN THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE COUNTRY; CONVERSELY, HE COULD ALSO BE A KEY PLAYER IN PREVENTING GAMAL'S ASCENDANCE. WE HAVE HEARD SOME LIMITED REPORTS OF TANTAWI'S INCREASING FRUSTRATION AND DISENCHANTMENT WITH GAMAL (REF B). IN THE EVENT OF A NATIONAL LEADERSHIP CRISIS, IT IS NEAR INCONCEIVABLE THAT GIVEN MUBARAK'S PERSONAL MANIPULATION OF THE OFFICER CORPS, THAT ANOTHER MILITARY OFFICER COULD EMERGE FROM OBSCURITY TO ASSERT HIMSELF AS A CANDIDATE. BUT TANTAWI AND HIS SENIOR COTERIE ARE NOT NECESSARILY POPULAR AT MID AND LOWER RANKS, SO THE POSSIBILITY OF A MID-20TH CENTURY STYLE COUP OF COLONELS CANNOT BE ENTIRELY DISCOUNTED.

OPPOSITION MEMBER  
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¶12. (C) OF THE 10 PRESIDENTIAL CONTENDERS IN 2005, SECOND-PLACE AL GHAD PARTY LEADER AYMAN NOUR IS CURRENTLY SERVING A SEVEN-YEAR JAIL TERM, AND ACCORDING TO EGYPTIAN LAW, WILL BE BANNED FROM PARTICIPATING IN EGYPTIAN POLITICAL LIFE FOR SEVERAL YEARS FOLLOWING HIS RELEASE. THE THIRD-PLACE FINISHER, AL WAFD PARTY CANDIDATE NO'MAN GOMAA, LOST HIS PARTY POSITION FOLLOWING A VIOLENT AND SCANDAL-RIDDEN LEADERSHIP STRUGGLE. THE OTHER EIGHT CANDIDATES, MARGINAL FIGURES TO BEGIN WITH, HAVE FADED BACK INTO TOTAL OBSCURITY. CURRENT AL WAFD LEADER MAHMOUD ABAZA IS A TALENTED POLITICIAN, BUT AT THIS POINT, DOES NOT APPEAR TO HAVE NATIONAL APPEAL OR ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY TO MOUNT A SERIOUS ATTEMPT AT THE PRESIDENCY.

DARK HORSE AND ALSO RANS  
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¶13. (C) POPULAR REFORMIST MINISTER OF TRADE RACHID IS A POTENTIAL CANDIDATE, THOUGH A DISTINCT DARK HORSE. NONETHELESS, HE COMES FROM AN OLD AND RESPECTED FAMILY AND IS SEEN BY MANY AS LARGELY RESPONSIBLE FOR EGYPT'S IMPRESSIVE ECONOMIC GROWTH OF THE PAST THREE YEARS. INTERESTINGLY, THE HEAD OF CAIRO'S LARGE AND INFLUENTIAL AMCHAM, WHO KNOWS RACHID WELL, TOLD US THAT, AFTER NEGOTIATING THE CONTROVERSIAL QIZ PROGRAM, THE MINISTER "REALLY NEEDS



MOVEMENT ON THE FTA FOR POLITICAL COVER," RAISING THE QUESTION: POLITICAL COVER FOR WHAT? WHILE IT IS HIGHLY UNLIKELY RACHID WOULD TAKE ON GAMAL HEAD-TO-HEAD, WE CANNOT DISCOUNT THE POSSIBILITY THAT HE WILLPLAY A ROLE IN A CARETAKER GOVERNMENT, AND MAY EENTUALLY EMERGE AS A LEADER.

¶14. (C) SAFWAT ELSHERIF (NDP SECRETARY GENERAL AND SHURA COUNCIL PEAKER), MUFEED SHEHAB (NDP ASSISTANT SYG, AND MINISTER OF STATE FOR LEGAL AND PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS, AND ZAKARIA AZMY (NDP ASSISTANT SYG AND MUBARA'S DE FACTO CHIEF OF STAFF) ALL, AS SENIOR LEADES OF THE NDP, MEET THE CONSTITUTIONAL CRITERIA T RUN FOR OFFICE. NONE OF THESE GRIZZLED NDP VETERANS HAVE PUBLICLY EXPRESSED PRESIDENTIAL ASPIRATONS, NOR DO THEY APPEAR TO POSSESS ANY CAPABILITIE TO GOVERN, NOR PERSONAL CONSTITUENCIES. HOWEVE, WHILE UNLIKELY, IT IS POSSIBLE THAT, ONCE MUBAAK PERE IS OUT OF THE PICTURE, ONE OF THEM COULD EMERGE IN AN ANTI-GAMAL PARTY PUTSCH. FURTHERMORE. MOST ANALYSTS HERE BELIEVE THAT ANY GOVERNOR PUSHING FOR THE PRESIDENCY IS A FAR-FETCHED POSSIBILITY - THE OVERWHELMING MAJORITY OF GOVERNORS ARE FORMER SENIOR MILITARY AND POLICE OFFICERS CHOSEN FOR THEIR LOYALTY, FAR FROM THE CRITICAL POLITICAL FRAY IN CAIRO, AND WITH NO POWER BASES.

MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD

¶15. (C) WHILE THE SPECTER OF AN MB PRESIDENCY HAUNTS SECULAR EGYPTIANS, IT IS HIGHLY UNLIKELY IN THE IMMEDIATE POST-MUBARAK PERIOD. UNDER THE CURRENT LEGAL FRAMEWORK, THE MB HAS NO ABILITY TO PUT FORWARD A PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE IN THE EVENT OF AN ELECTION. THE ORGANIZATION DOES NOT APPEAR TO HAVE THE ORGANIZED MILITARY WING NECESSARY SHOULD IT WISH TO ATTEMPT TO SEIZE THE PRESIDENCY BY FORCE. CONSTANT OVERSIGHT OF THE ARMED FORCES AIMED AT ROOTING OUT POTENTIAL ISLAMIST SYMPATHIZERS MEANS THAT FEW LIKELY REMAIN, ALTHOUGH THE POSSIBILITY DOES EXIST THAT SOME CLOSE-MOUTHED MB-LEANING OFFICERS ARE PRESENT. OVERALL, IN THE VIEW OF MOST EGYPTIAN ANALYSTS, THE GROUP'S APPROACH SEEMS TO BE ONE OF PATIENCE AND GRASS ROOTS BUILDING OF SUPPORT, WAITING FOR THE DAY WHEN IT MIGHT COME TO POWER THROUGH POPULAR ELECTION, OR BY POPULAR DEMAND AFTER A GAMAL PRESIDENCY HAS FOUNDERED.

POST-SUCCESSION DYNAMICS

¶16. (C) WHOEVER EGYPT'S NEXT PRESIDENT IS, HE WILL INEVITABLY BE POLITICALLY WEAKER THAN MUBARAK, AND ONCE HE HAS ASSUMED THE POST, AMONG HIS FIRST PRIORITIES WILL BE TO CEMENT HIS POSITION AND BUILD POPULAR SUPPORT. WE CAN THUS ANTICIPATE THAT THE NEW PRESIDENT MAY SOUND AN INITIAL ANTI-AMERICAN TONE IN HIS PUBLIC RHETORIC, IN AN EFFORT TO PROVE HIS NATIONALIST BONA FIDES TO THE EGYPTIAN STREET, AND DISTANCE HIMSELF FROM MUBARAK'S POLICIES. IF HISTORY IS ANY GUIDE, WE CAN ALSO EXPECT THE NEW PRESIDENT TO EXTEND AN OLIVE BRANCH TO THE MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD, AS DID GAMAL ABDEL NASSER, ANWAR EL SADAT, AND MUBARAK EARLY IN ALL OF THEIR TERMS, IN AN EFFORT TO CO-OPT POTENTIAL OPPOSITION, AND BOOST POPULARITY. RICCIARDONE